

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. A method for replicating a plurality of original packets in a packet flow, the packet flow following a first routing path, the method comprising:

5 receiving the packet flow with a first device, the first device being included in the first routing path;

in the first device, identifying the original packets in the packet flow according to at least one predetermined criterion;

in the first device, generating replicate packets corresponding to the original packets;

10 transmitting the original packets from the first device along the first routing path; and

transmitting the replicate packets from the first device along a second routing path, the second routing path being different from the first routing path.

15 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the second routing path includes a second device, the second device being logically connected with the first device via a protocol.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein the protocol comprises a packet redirection protocol.

20 4. The method of claim 3 wherein the packet redirection protocol comprises an object caching protocol.

5. The method of claim 2 wherein the original packets indicate a destination device, the destination device being included in the first routing path, the first device
25 transmitting the original packets to the destination device via the first routing path, the

second device facilitating transmission of the replicate packets to the destination device via the second routing path.

6. The method of claim 2 wherein the second device comprises a test device for facilitating inspection of the replicate packets.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein each of the original packets indicate one of a plurality of destination devices each of the destination devices being logically connected with the first device via a protocol, a first one of the destination devices being included in the first routing path, a second one of destination devices being included in the second routing path, and wherein the replicate packets are transmitted along the second routing path to the second one of the destination devices.

8. The method of claim 7 further comprising:
determining which of the original and replicate packets reach their respective destination devices first, thereby identifying a winner destination device; and
awarding a connection to an originating device to the winner destination device.

9. The method of claim 2 further comprising:
receiving a request from the second device for connecting with the first device via the protocol; and
connecting with the second device via the protocol.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein the request from the second device identifies the at least one predetermined criterion.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein the original packets originate from a source device, the method for replicating the original packets being transparent to the source device.

5 12. The method of claim 1 wherein the original packets indicate a destination device, the method for replicating the original packets being transparent to the destination device.

13. The method of claim 1 wherein the first device comprises a router.

10 14. The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one predetermined criterion comprises a source address.

15 15. The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one predetermined criterion comprises a destination address.

16. The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one predetermined criterion comprises a socket.

20 17. The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one predetermined criterion comprises a port.

18. The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one predetermined criterion comprises a protocol type.

means for receiving the packet flow, the receiving means being included in the first routing path;

means for generating replicate packets corresponding to the original packets;

means for transmitting the replicate packets along a second routing path, the second routing path being different from the first routing path.

a memory having at least a portion of a router operating system stored therein; and

receive the packet flow with the router, the router being included in the first routing path;

generate replicate packets corresponding to the original packets;

transmit the replicate packets from the router along a second routing path, the second routing path being different from the first routing path.

21. A computer program product for replicating a plurality of original packets in a packet flow, the packet flow following a first routing path, the computer program product comprising:

5 at least one computer readable medium; and
computer program instructions stored in the at least one computer readable medium for causing a processing device to:

receive the packet flow, the processing device being included in the first routing path;

10 identify the original packets in the packet flow according to at least one predetermined criterion;

generate replicate packets corresponding to the original packets;

transmit the original packets along the first routing path; and

15 transmit the replicate packets along a second routing path, the second routing path being different from the first routing path.

22. A method for remotely monitoring a portion of a packet flow associated with a first device using a second device, the packet flow following a first routing path, the method comprising:

20 receiving a request from the second device for connecting with the first device via a protocol;

logically connecting with the second device via the protocol;

receiving the packet flow with the first device, the first device being included in the first routing path;

in the first device, identifying original packets in the packet flow according to at least one predetermined criterion;

in the first device, generating replicate packets corresponding to the original packets;

transmitting the original packets from the first device along the first routing path; and

transmitting the replicate packets from the first device to the second device along a second routing path, the second routing path being different from the first routing path.

23. A router operable to facilitate monitoring by a remote device of a portion of a packet flow associated with a router, the packet flow following a first routing path which includes the router, the router comprising:

a memory having at least a portion of a router operating system stored therein; and

a processor for controlling operation of the router according to the router operating system, the processor being configured by the router operating system to:

receive a request from the remote device for connecting with the first device via a protocol;

logically connect with the remote device via the protocol;

receive the packet flow;

identify original packets in the packet flow according to at least one predetermined criterion;

generate replicate packets corresponding to the original packets;

transmit the original packets along the first routing path; and

transmit the replicate packets to the remote device along a second routing path, the second routing path being different from the first routing path.

24. A method for replicating a plurality of original packets in a packet flow, the packet flow following a first routing path, the original packets indicating a destination device, an intermediate device and the destination device being included in the first routing path, the method comprising:

5 receiving the packet flow with the intermediate device;
in the intermediate device, identifying the original packets in the packet flow according to at least one predetermined criterion;
in the intermediate device, generating replicate packets corresponding to the original packets;
10 transmitting the original packets from the intermediate device to the destination device along the first routing path; and
transmitting the replicate packets from the intermediate device to the destination device along at least one other routing path, the at least one other routing path being different from the first routing path.

15 25. A router operable to replicate a plurality of original packets in a packet flow, the packet flow following a first routing path, the original packets indicating a destination device, the router and the destination device being included in the first routing path, the router comprising:

20 a memory having at least a portion of a router operating system stored therein; and
a processor for controlling operation of the router according to the router operating system, the processor being configured by the router operating system to:

receive the packet flow;
identify the original packets in the packet flow according to at least
25 one predetermined criterion;

generate replicate packets corresponding to the original packets;
 transmit the original packets to the destination device along the first
 routing path; and
 transmit the replicate packets to the destination device along at least
 one other routing path, the at least one other routing path being different from
 the first routing path.

26. A method for replicating a plurality of original packets in a packet flow, the
 packet flow following a first routing path, the original packets indicating one of a plurality of
 destination devices, an intermediate device and a first one of the destination devices being
 included in the first routing path, the method comprising:

receiving the packet flow with the intermediate device;
 in the intermediate device, identifying the original packets in the packet flow
 according to at least one predetermined criterion;
 in the intermediate device, generating replicate packets corresponding to the original
 packets;
 transmitting the original packets from the intermediate device to the first destination
 device along the first routing path; and
 transmitting the replicate packets from the intermediate device to at least one other of
 the destination devices along at least one other routing path.

27. A router operable to replicate a plurality of original packets in a packet flow,
 the packet flow following a first routing path, the original packets indicating one of a
 plurality of destination devices, the router and a first one of the destination devices being
 included in the first routing path, the router comprising:

receive the packet flow;

generate replicate packets corresponding to the original packets;

transmit the replicate packets to at least one other of the destination

devices along at least one other routing path.